# Castlemaine Naturalist

November 2019

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**Monthly newsletter of the Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc.**

Male Superb Fairy-wren in glossy spring plumage
- photo Noel Young

## SEANA Spring 2019 Camp in Castlemaine

Field naturalists from across Victoria arrived at the Campbells Creek Community Centre on Friday 4th October for the South East Australian Naturalists Association (SEANA) weekend of talks and excursions, hosted by Castlemaine FNC. Seventeen of the 21 FNC member clubs of SEANA were represented, from Portland to Albury/Wodonga, Bendigo to Sale, with 115 visitors and 18 CFNC members registered. Our region proved very popular!

We had arranged 30 excursions in total, from Saturday morning to Monday lunchtime, most half day sessions and 3 full day tours, with a maximum of 18 people per excursion. So on arrival the visitors signed up for their choice of excursions. Earlier in the day an efficient team of CFNC members had set up the hall at the Community Centre to seat 140 for the evening buffet meals on Friday and Saturday, with vases of wildflowers arranged by Phee Broadway. After the meal, our President George Broadway opened the Gathering, introducing local Dja Dja Wurrung Elder Uncle Ricky Nelson, who welcomed our visitors to the country his people had nurtured for millennia before the changes wrought by pastoralists and gold miners. The guest speaker was Tanya Loos, who first showed a video about Connecting Country's work, before outlining the way in which the organisation's Woodland Bird Monitoring program has been used to assess the impacts of habitat restoration.

On Saturday evening, after another excellent buffet meal prepared and served by Dove Café staff, the guest speaker was Tim Entwisle, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, who also spoke at the 1998 gathering. Tim was taught chemistry at Castlemaine High School by Ern Perkins and George Broadway but studied Botany at Melbourne University. His topic was "Joseph Banks and his Collection"; we followed Banks, a wealthy 25 year old, on his journey around the world, collecting a vast number of plants species, all carefully pressed and stored by the scientists he supported on the journey. Extracts from his journal (now available online) revealed fascinating insights into Banks' attitudes to the peoples, places and environments visited on this historic voyage.

The excursion program covered many of the special places in our region, with an emphasis on wildflowers and birds, as shown in the table. The half-day tour along Fryers Ridge, led by George Broadway, repeated the excursion George led the last time field naturalists gathered in Castlemaine, in September 1998. Plant and bird lists resulted from many of these outings and will be included in a full report at a later date. The complex geological history of the region was demonstrated in a tour around the town, and on the volcanic plains to the west. Several excursions examined the results of dedicated habitat restoration by Landcare groups and Connecting Country. Our visitors remarked on the range and numbers of flowering native species, and several of the birding sessions recorded over 30 species. In addition to the excursion leaders shown in the table, an assistant was appointed for most sessions to help with the logistics.

Other activities over the weekend included the SEANA General Meeting on Saturday afternoon, where plans for future gatherings were considered, and the Hamilton FNC announced some details of the Autumn 2020 meeting they will host next April, Notable all weekend were the many meetings over lunches and dinners, friendships developed over many SEANA camps renewed in enthusiastic discussions. These gatherings of natural history lovers from across the state, in different regions once or twice a year, are a stimulating way to learn more about the diversity of landforms and natural environments in Victoria from local experts, and to make new friends amongst a large group of like-minded people. From the many compliments and thanks we have received, Castlemaine FNC can feel satisfied that we kept the SEANA flag flying high over the Central Goldfields. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the planning for and running of the event, as members of the organising committee, as excursion leaders and assistants, and with the many tasks at the Community Centre, which proved to be the perfect venue.

| Saturday Morning | Saturday Afternoon |
|---|---|
| **#1 ALL DAY: Rise & Shine Reserve**<br>Mainly birds, with Jane Rusden, Damian Kelly and Philip Hopley | |
| **#2 ALL DAY: Moolort Plains**<br>Wetlands with Damien Cook; Volcanoes & Earthquake with Gary Gibson | |
| **#3 Railway Dam**<br>Birds with Ron Wescott, Cheryl Taylor | **#8 Forest Creek**<br>Habitat restoration, birds with Christine Kilmartin |
| **#4 Fryers Ridge Tour.** Wildflowers with George Broadway, Jeremy Holland | **#9 Eureka Reef** Wildflowers, mining history & birds with Noel Young, Marli Wallace |
| **#5 Muckleford Forest**<br>Wildflowers, orchids with Richard Piesse and David Elliott | **#10 Castlemaine Geology**<br>Clive Willman |
| **#6 Kalimna Wildlflowers**<br>Rosemary and Peter Turner | **#11 Castlemaine Botanical Gardens.**<br>Kevin Walsh |
| **#7 Ajax Mine**<br>Jules Hurley & Rex Odgers | **#12 Boundary, Escape & Youngmans Tracks**<br>Geraldine & Geoff Harris |

| Sunday Morning | Sunday Afternoon |
|---|---|
| **#13 ALL DAY: Bald Hills Reserve, Kyneton, and Malmsbury**<br>Birds, wildflowers with Euan Moore and Jenny Rolland | |
| **#14 Gunn Property, Walmer**<br>Habitat restoration, birds with Cullen Gunn & Tanya Loos | **#20 Nuggety Back Cemetery**<br>Birds with Kerrie Jennings and Jane Mitchell |
| **#15 Campbells Creek.** Habitat restoration with Karl Just | **#21 Castlemaine Botanical Gardens (repeat)**<br>Kevin Walsh |
| **#16 Wewak Track** Wildflowers & landscape with Bernard Slattery & Jeremy Holland | **#22 Irishtown**<br>Boronia with G & G Harris |
| **#17 Coliban Channel**<br>Birds, historic water channel with Damian Kelly | **#23 Railway Dam (repeat)**<br>Birds with Ron Wescott, Cheryl Taylor |
| **#18 Eureka Reef (repeat).**<br>Wildflowers, mining history & birds<br>Noel Young, Marli Wallace | **#24 Newstead Natives Nursery:**<br>Indigeneous plants<br>Frances Cincotta (cancelled) |
| **#19 Kalimna Wildlflowers**<br>Richard Piesse, Sue Albert | **#25 Red White & Blue Mine**<br>Wildflowers. P Turner, P Hopley |
| **Monday Morning** | |
| **#25 Warburton Bridge.**<br>Birds with Rosemary and Peter Turner | **#29 Muckleford Forest - Repeat**<br>Wildflowers, Orchids with David Elliott and Geraldine Harris |
| **#27 Rise & Shine NR - Repeat**<br>Birds, wildflowers with Ron Westcott and Cheryl Taylor | **#30 Newstead Natives Nursery**<br>Indigenous plants with Frances Cincotta |
| **#28 Fryers Ridge Tour - Repeat**<br>Wildflowers with George Broadway | and Jeremy Holland |

## Removing Needle Grasses from the Botanic Gardens

CFNC has been awarded $5000 by Mt Alexander Shire for continuation of the program led by member Margaret Panter to identify and remove needle grasses from Council land (mainly roadsides) around the town and from the Castlemaine Botanic Gardens. These funds pay for a specialist contractor for selective spraying and direct removal of these weeds. There will be working bees in the Botanic Gardens to remove individual plants before seeding over the next few months. When Margaret identifies a new group of needle grasses before the seed, we will notify members who have volunteered to assist of the time for the next session. If you are able to assist for an hour or two at some of these sessions, please let me know.

Peter Turner (0439 369 709 - or email castlemainefnc@hotmail.com)

# Wednesday Wildflower Walk 25/9/19 - The Monk

Peter Turner, with list by Geraldine Harris and photo by Noel Young

The Monk is a favourite wildflower area, where the endangered red Castlemaine Spider Orchid has been seen in recent years. Since a SEANA excursion had been planned for the area, the 6 members who gathered at the Octopus agreed to check it out. A reasonable plant list, but no Spider Orchids. The highlight was the Bluebeard Orchid, *Pheladenia deformis,* close to where the Goldfields Track branches off the steep track up to the top of The Monk.

*Grevillea alpina* Downy Grevillea
*Ranunculus pachycarpus* Thick-fruit Buttercup?
*Drosera aberrans* Scented Sundew not in flower
*Tetratheca ciliata* Pink Bells
*Pelargonium rodneyanum* Magenta Stork'sbill
*Acacia acinacea* Gold-dust Wattle
*Philotheca verrucosa* Fairy Waxflower
*Acrotriche serrulata* Honeypots - not in flower
*Hardenbergia violacea* Purple Coral-pea
*Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia* Green Rock Fern
*Hydrocotyle laxiflora* Stinking Pennywort
***Pheladenia deformis*** **Blue-beard Orchid ==>**
*Ozothamnus obcordatus* Grey Everlasting
*Lomandra filiformis* Wattle Mat-rush
*Acacia genistifolia* Spreading Wattle
*Goodenia blackiana* Black's Goodenia
*Diuris pardina* Leopard Orchid
*Drosera auriculata* Tall Sundew
*Caladenia fuscata* Dusky Fingers
*Caladenia carnea* s.l. Pink Fingers
*Daviesia ulicifolia* ssp. *rusifolia* Gorse Bitter-pea
*Glossodia major* Wax-lip Orchid
*Xerochrysum viscosum* Sticky Everlasting
*Millotia tenuifolia* Soft Millotia
*Craspedia variabilis* Billy Buttons
*Wurmbea dioica* Common Early Nancy
*Caladenia pusilla* Tiny Pink Fingers
*Poa* sp.

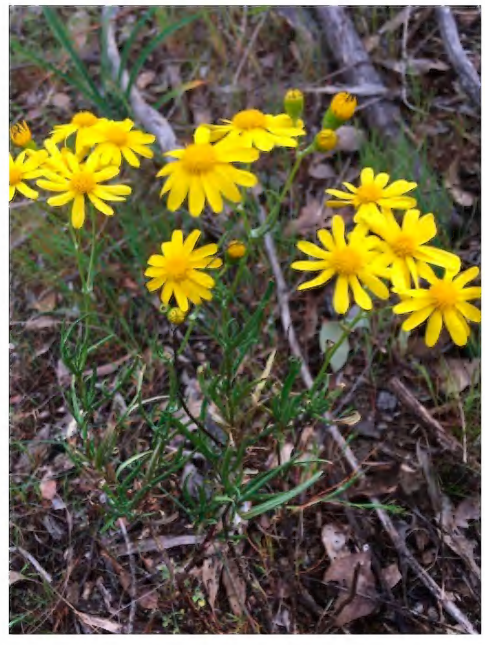
# Wednesday Wildflower Walk 2/10/19 - Boundary Track

Geraldine Harris

Our most exciting find for the evening was a single plant bearing bright yellow daisies which keyed out to be a Variable Groundsel (*Senecio pinnatifolius* var. *pinnatifolius*). There were lots of Sun Orchid leaves but none in flower.

*Acacia acinacea* Gold-dust Wattle
*Caladenia carnea* Pink Fingers
*Caladenia fuscata* Dusky Fingers
*Cassytha glabella* Slender Dodder-laurel
*Craspedia variabilis* Billy-buttons

*Daviesia ulicifolia* Gorse Bitter-pea
*Diuris pardina* Leopard Orchid
*Drosera auriculata* Tall Sundew
*Drosera macrantha* Climbing Sundew
*Glossodia major* Waxlip Orchid
*Grevillea alpina* Downy Grevillea
*Hardenbergia violacea* Purple Coral-pea
*Hovea heterophylla* Common Hovea
*Luzula meridionalis* v *densiflora* Common Woodrush
*Lomandra multiflora* Many-flowered Mat-rush
*Microseris walteri* Yam Daisy
*Ozothamnus obcordatus* Grey Everlasting
*Philotheca verrucosa* Fairy Wax-flower
*Pimelea linifolia* Slender Rice-flower
*Poa* sp. Tussock-grass
*Rhytidosporum procumbens* White Marianth
*Senecio phelleus* Slender Groundsel
***Senecio pinnatifolius*** **Variable Groundsel ===>**
*Stackhousia monogyna* Creamy Candles
*Tetratheca ciliata* Pink Bells
*Thysanotus patersonii* Twining Fringe-lily
*Wurmbea dioica* Early Nancy
*Xerochrysum viscosum* Sticky Everlasting



# November Observations (1941)

George Broadway

What readers of "Wildlife" magazine were observing and sending in for identification in November 1941. In November 1941 Japanese admiral Yamamoto issued instructions to the Japanese fleet for the attack on Pearl Harbour. Number one on the Hit Parade was "Chatanooga Choo Choo" by Glenn Miller.
Specimens received at "Wildlife" included :-

**INSECTS**

Casterton: Tortoise Beetle, named from its appearance. A leaf eating beetle

Tongala: Caterpillar of the Convolvulus Hawk Moth. See previous

Kerang: Wingless Mountain Grasshopper, one of few native insects found above the snow line. The male is much smaller than the female and both look immature having only rudimentary wing vestiges.
Red-headed Trapdoor Spider. *Eriodon rubrocapitatum*. (At this time it was only suspected of being the male of the Mallee Mouse spider, of which only females had been recorded while all Red headed spiders were male).

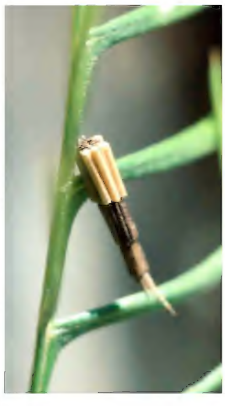
Ararat: Your butterfly is a tropical variety seldom seen so far south. It known as the Common Egg-fly for some unknown reason. It is *Hypolimnas bolina nerina.* The larvae appear in the spring and feed on Paddy's Lucerne (*Sida retusa)* and *Portulaca*, feeding only at night and hiding during the daytime.

Leslie Manor: Blue-black specimens with wings like a black shed roof with light spots is the "Pretty Little Cicada", *Eurymeloides pulchra,* a leaf-hopper closely related to the larger Cicadas which make a noise in summer. They suck sap from leaves and usually congregate in large numbers.

Hampton: Large Carab Beetle. It digs with jaws and feet and feeds largely on grubs and other creatures which it finds below ground.

Richmond: The "spider thing" found in the wood is a Longicorn Beetle, *Phorocantha.* Previously mentioned frequently. They bore in the wood of trees and are often found in firewood, hence are often called "Firewood Beetle". Also Dandenong.

Gheringhap: The butterflies which have seen seen in thousands in your district recently are the Cabbage White, injurious to many vegetables, especially of the Brassica family. Remember in 1941 they had only recently found their way to Victoria via NZ from the USA and Europe so were not generally well known. This despite strict quarantine barriers.



Glen Iris: White butterfly

Mt Gambier: A Lictor Casemoth, a group which spends the whole of its caterpillar life in a silken case reinforced with sticks. [photo 1] Mentioned previously. The moth which emerges is a swift flying shaggy-looking male; the female never leaves the case, after mating she retires inside, lays her eggs and dies.

Mordialloc: Large Tree Cricket, *Paragryllacris,* frequently found in firewood. The large jaws can chew timber with ease and can give a painful bite, although not dangerous. Previously described.

Ferntree Gully and Mordialloc: A Crane fly. See Patrick Kavanagh's magnificent photos in "Natural Newstead".

Ascot Vale: Praying Mantis, a useful insect to have in the garden as it preys on mostly harmful insects. Occasionally disgraces itself by catching a bee.

Clifton Hill: Rat-tailed maggot of the Bee fly. [photo 2] One of the flower flies which imitate bees although they have no sting. The larvae are effective scavengers.

Beaufort and Blackburn: Carpet beetles. The adults live on flowers especially Chrysanthenums but they frequently enter houses and lay their eggs on carpets near skirting boards and in woollen clothing.

Leitchville: One of our most beautiful solitary grasshoppers, the Great Crested Grasshopper, *Alectoria superba*. Feeds on vegetable matter but is never a pest because of its solitary habits. Would that other grasshoppers behaved likewise.

**SPIDERS**

Kallista: The white wafer-like specimens were two flat egg sacs of a spider, one overlapping the other. Normally these are placed under bark so I suspect that they came into the house with the firewood. (Remember that in 1941 most people brought firewood into the house) The spider that makes them is one of the "crab" spiders.

Buckley: Young orb spinner. *Epeira* by name. Harmless

St Kilda: Bird dropping spider, *Celaenia excavate.* Already noted several times

Mortlake: Bird Dropping Spider. Also Carnegie

Geelong: Melbourne Trapdoor Spider, fairly common but never known to have bitten anyone.

Essendon: The Redback or Jockey spider; the only Victorian spider known to be dangerous.

Elsternwick: Humpback Spider, *Uloborus* sp. Makes interesting strings of egg sacs in an irregular web.

In recent months we have welcomed as **new members** of the club:

Kerrie Jennings, Alison Menzies & Rachel McLaughlin, Cathrine Harboe-ree, Stan Smith, Mez Woodward, Sue Teltscher, Jill Williams, Robyn Davidson.

**Our guest speakers for November will cover the topic of the**

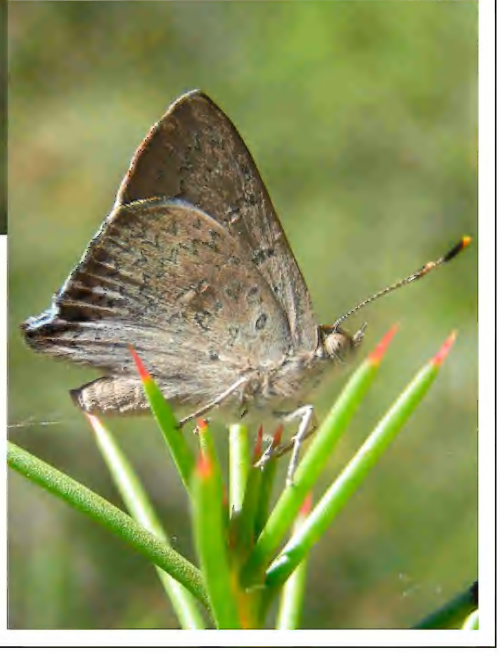
## Castlemaine (Eltham) Copper Butterflies

Castlemaine and Bendigo host the largest area of Eltham Copper Butterfly (ECB) habitat in the world. Given the global decline in insects, particularity Butterflies which appear to be the hardest hit, it is now critical that we protect our Australian butterflies, of which ECB is a flagship species.

At our meeting on Friday 8th November Elaine Bayes and Karl Just, local ecologists, will be presenting the current distribution of ECB, the amazing relationship ECB has with *Notoncus* ants and the host plant Sweet Bursaria. Current programs of monitoring and management will also be presented. There has been little research on the north central ECB for the last decade. Elaine, Karl and Julie Radford are trying to change this by leading the community in searching for new ECB populations and mapping colonies so we can protect them from planned burns and other threats.

Upcoming opportunities for the local community to be involved in studying and saving this species will be provided. Monitoring ECB also provides a great excuse to walk through our stunning bushlands over the summer months when ECB are flying.

Two views of the ECB, and Eltham Copper Caterpillar, attended by ants.



# Castlemaine Field Naturalists
## Coming events

**Fri November 8 meeting:** speakers ELAINE BAYES and KARL JUST on the rare Eltham Copper Butterfly in Castlemaine

**NB: This meeting will be in the Chapel**

**Sat November 9 field trip:** E C butterfly search Kalimna

**Monday 11th November:** Roadside cleanup - Organiser Geoff Harris
9 a.m. start at cnr. Golf Links road on Pyrenees Highway
Takes 1 – 2 hrs., Wear sturdy footwear and gloves. Garbage bags and reflective vests will be supplied. Please note KABC rules prohibit anyone under 16 from working on the roadside.

**Fri Dec 13 meeting:** Member's night and break-up

**Disclaimer:** The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the club

**VISITORS ARE WELCOME AT CLUB ACTIVITIES**

**General meetings -** (second Friday of each month, except January) are held in the Uniting Church (UCA) Hall (enter from Lyttleton St.) at 7.30 pm.

**Field Trips -** (Saturday following the general meeting) leave from the car park opposite Castle Motel, Duke Street at 1.30pm sharp unless stated otherwise. BYO morning and/or afternoon tea. Outdoor excursions are likely to be cancelled in extreme weather conditions. There are NO excursions on total fire ban days.

**Business meetings** - third Thursday of each month, except December, at George Broadways; 24a Greenhill Ave., at 6.00 pm. Members are invited to attend.

**Club website** (Web master: Ron Wescott) - http://castlemainefnc.wordpress.com/

**Subscriptions for 2019**
Ordinary membership: Single $35, Family $50
Pensioner or student: Single $25, Family $30
Subscription includes postage of the monthly newsletter, Castlemaine Naturalist

**2019 Committee**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
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